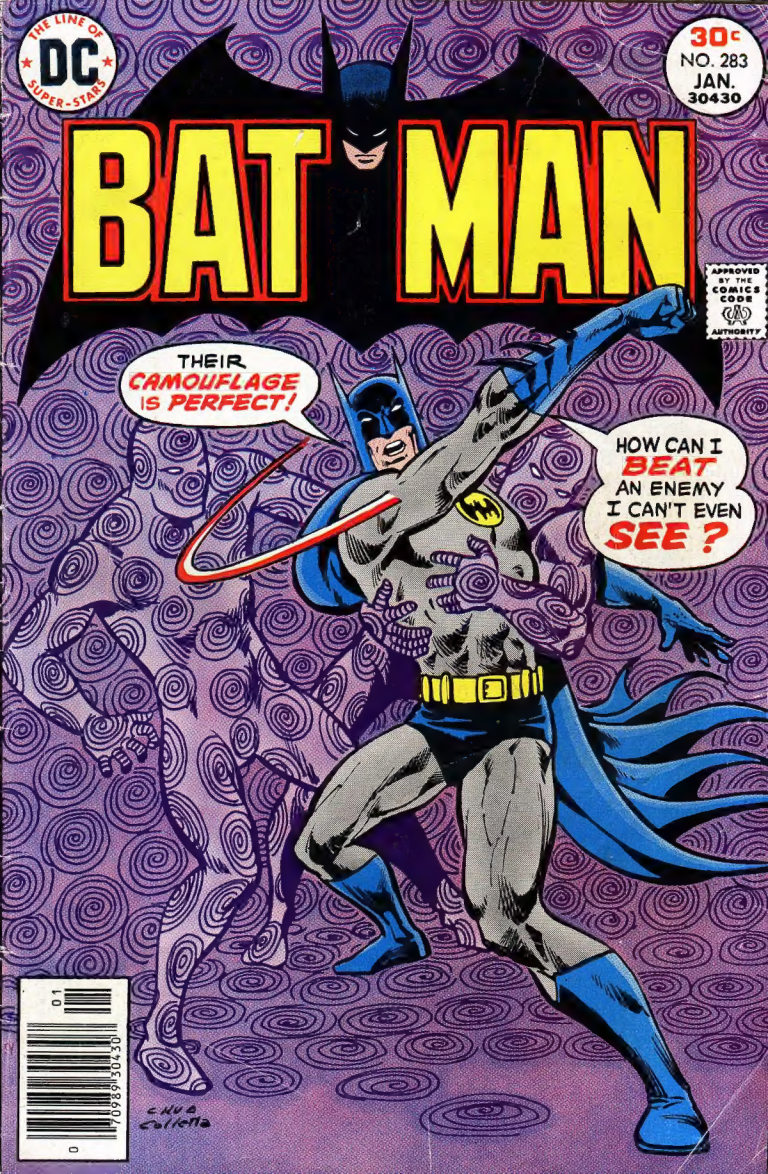
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BAT MAN
APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY
THEIR CAMOUFLAGE IS PERFECT!
HOW CAN I BEAT AN ENEMY I CAN'T EVEN SEE ?
CHUA
Calleja

BLAM
BLAM
THIS WAS IT--THE MOST CRUEL AND COMPLEX CRIMINAL CONSPIRACY IN GOTHAM'S HISTORY--WITH THE BATMAN AS CHIEF CONSPIRATOR--PLAYING A DIABOLIC GAME OF FOLLOW-THE-LEADER FOR BILLION-DOLLAR STAKES!

OMEGA BOMB TARGET: GOTHAM CITY

S-2440

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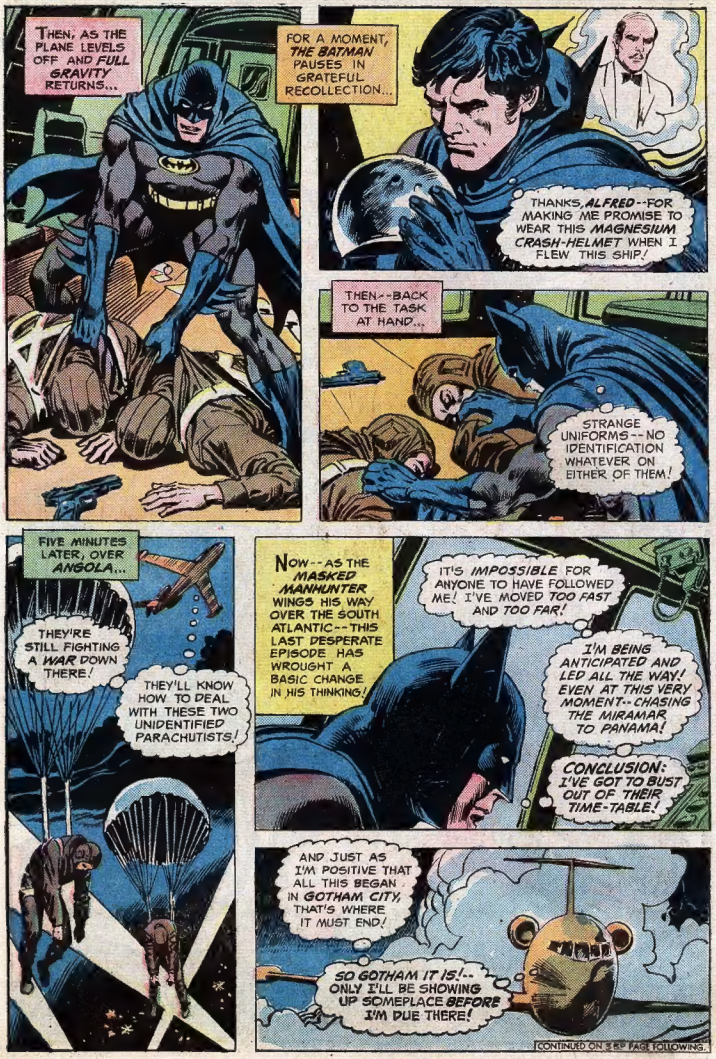
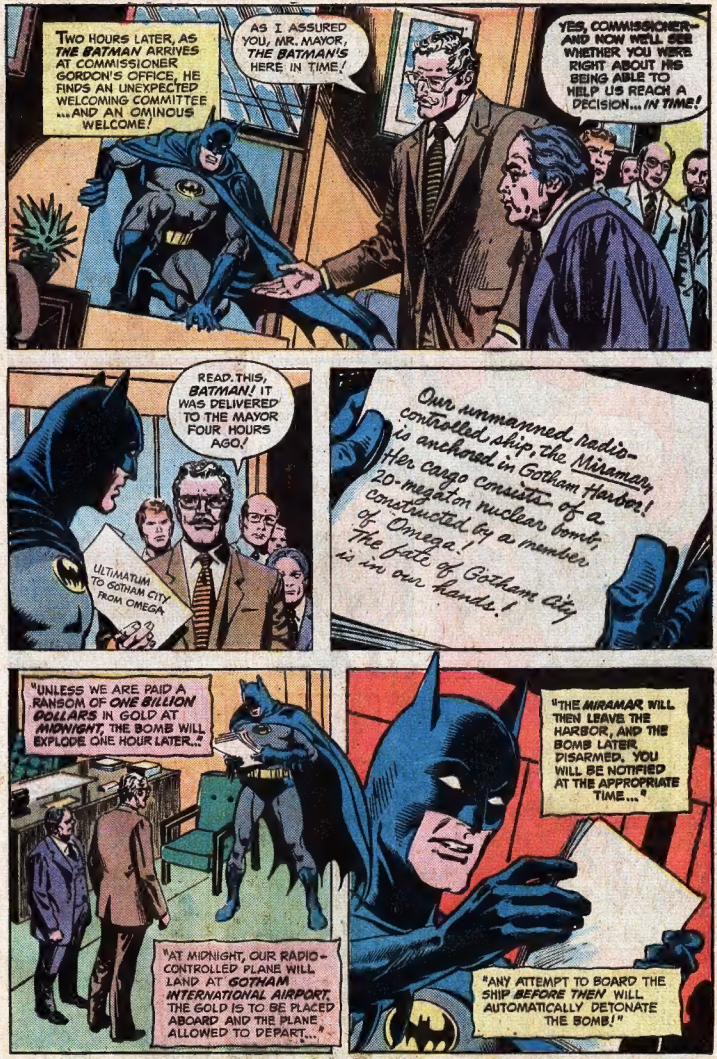
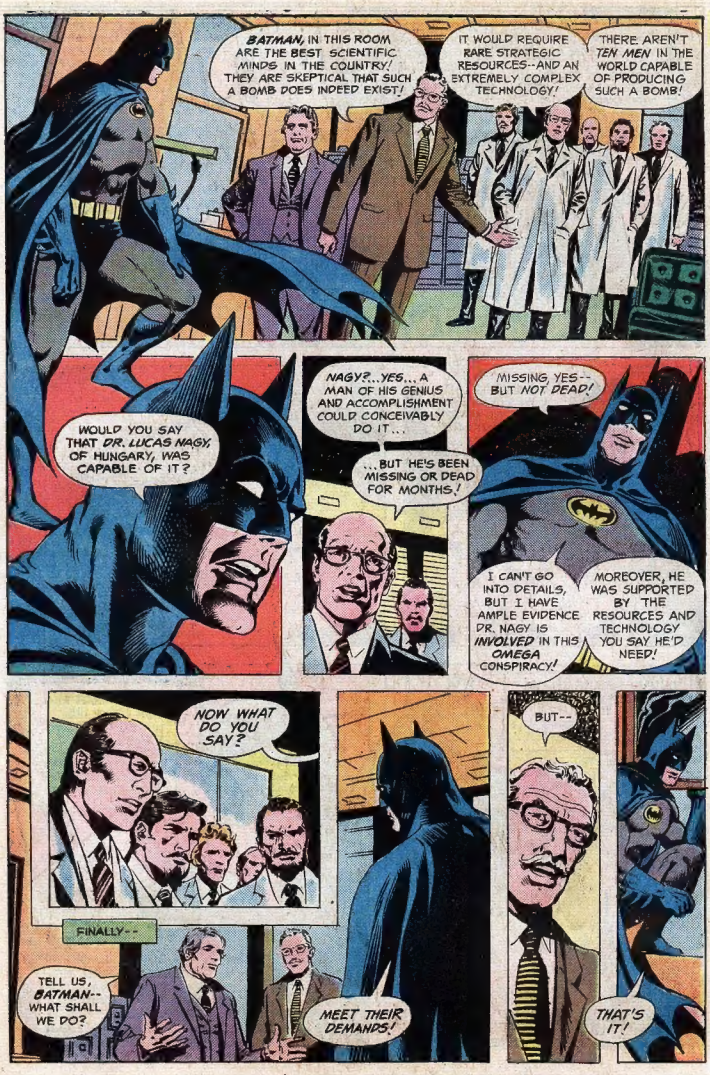
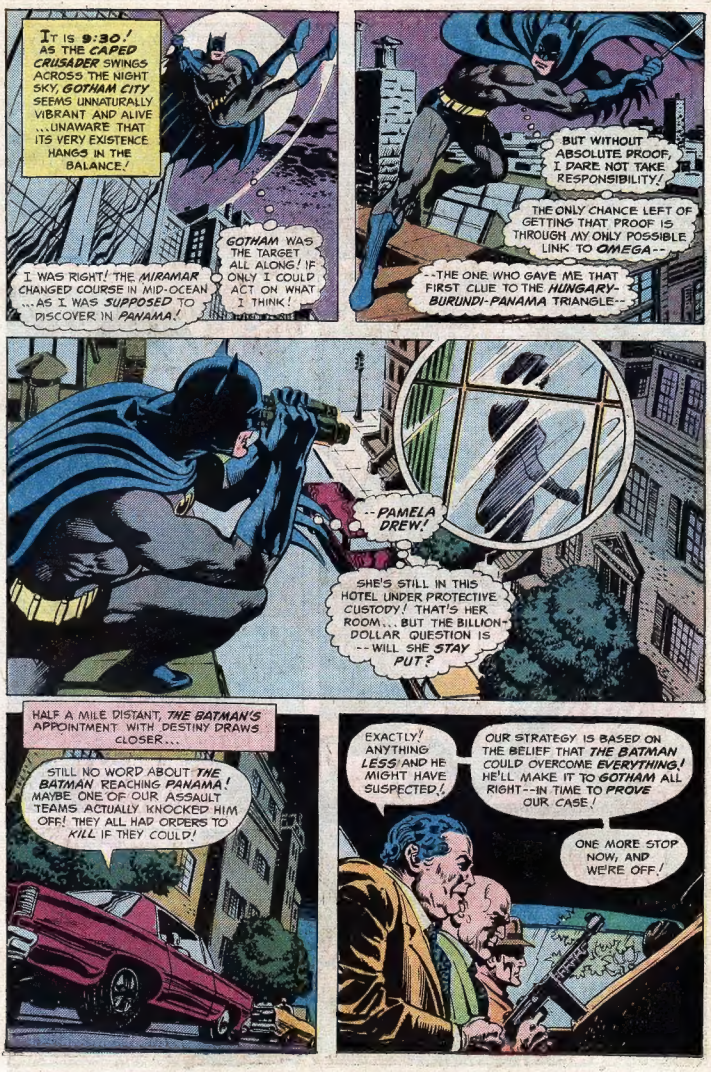
OUT-- FAST!
THE PLANE'S GOING INTO A DIVE!
GET THAT DOOR OPEN BEFORE WE CRASH!
GO! I'LL FOLLOW!
NO, YOU DON'T!
WHRAM
PLUNGING EARTHWARD AT A 70-DEGREE ANGLE, THE MORTAL COMBAT CONTINUES...
BUT AS THE ALTIMETER HITS THE 3000-FOOT MARK-- AUTOMATIC CONTROLS TAKE OVER-- AND THE PLANE ZOOMS OUT OF ITS MACH-6 DIVE!

THE PARALYZING PULL OF A FORCE SEVERAL TIMES GRAVITY IS SUDDENLY SUSPENDED--
--AND FOR A BRIEF INTERVAL, EVERYTHING BECOMES WEIGHTLESS!
READY FOR THE PHENOMENON-- THE BATMAN MAKES THE MOST OF IT--HIS FURY UNLEASHED, LETHAL!


THEN, AS THE PLANE LEVELS OFF AND FULL GRAVITY RETURNS...
FOR A MOMENT, THE BATMAN PAUSES IN GRATEFUL RECOLLECTION...
THANKS, ALFRED--FOR MAKING ME PROMISE TO WEAR THIS MAGNESIUM CRASH-HELMET WHEN I FLEW THIS SHIP!
THEN--BACK TO THE TASK AT HAND...
STRANGE UNIFORMS--NO IDENTIFICATION WHATEVER ON EITHER OF THEM!
FIVE MINUTES LATER, OVER ANGOLA...
THEY'RE STILL FIGHTING A WAR DOWN THERE!
THEY'LL KNOW HOW TO DEAL WITH THESE TWO UNIDENTIFIED PARACHUTISTS!
NOW--AS THE MASKED MANHUNTER WINGS HIS WAY OVER THE SOUTH ATLANTIC--THIS LAST DESPERATE EPISODE HAS WROUGHT A BASIC CHANGE IN HIS THINKING!
IT'S IMPOSSIBLE FOR ANYONE TO HAVE FOLLOWED ME! I'VE MOVED TOO FAST AND TOO FAR!
I'M BEING ANTICIPATED AND LED ALL THE WAY! EVEN AT THIS VERY MOMENT--CHASING THE MIRAMAR TO PANAMA!
CONCLUSION: I'VE GOT TO BUST OUT OF THEIR TIME-TABLE!
AND JUST AS I'M POSITIVE THAT ALL THIS BEGAN IN GOTHAM CITY, THAT'S WHERE IT MUST END!
SO GOTHAM IT IS!-- ONLY I'LL BE SHOWING UP SOMEPLACE BEFORE I'M DUE THERE!
CONTINUED ON 3RD PAG FOLLOWING


TWO HOURS LATER, AS THE BATMAN ARRIVES AT COMMISSIONER GORDON'S OFFICE, HE FINDS AN UNEXPECTED WELCOMING COMMITTEE ...AND AN OMINOUS WELCOME!
AS I ASSURED YOU, MR. MAYOR, THE BATMAN'S HERE IN TIME!
YES, COMMISSIONER— AND NOW WE'LL SEE WHETHER YOU WERE RIGHT ABOUT HIS BEING ABLE TO HELP US REACH A DECISION... IN TIME!
READ THIS, BATMAN! IT WAS DELIVERED TO THE MAYOR FOUR HOURS AGO!
ULTIMATUM TO GOTHAM CITY FROM OMEGA
Our unmanned radio-controlled ship, the Miramar, is anchored in Gotham Harbor! Her cargo consists of a 20-megaton nuclear bomb, constructed by a member of Omega! The fate of Gotham City is in our hands!
"UNLESS WE ARE PAID A RANSOM OF ONE BILLION DOLLARS IN GOLD AT MIDNIGHT, THE BOMB WILL EXPLODE ONE HOUR LATER..."
"AT MIDNIGHT, OUR RADIO-CONTROLLED PLANE WILL LAND AT GOTHAM INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT. THE GOLD IS TO BE PLACED ABOARD AND THE PLANE ALLOWED TO DEPART..."
"THE MIRAMAR WILL THEN LEAVE THE HARBOR, AND THE BOMB LATER DISARMED. YOU WILL BE NOTIFIED AT THE APPROPRIATE TIME..."
"ANY ATTEMPT TO BOARD THE SHIP BEFORE THEN WILL AUTOMATICALLY DETONATE THE BOMB!"


BATMAN, IN THIS ROOM ARE THE BEST SCIENTIFIC MINDS IN THE COUNTRY! THEY ARE SKEPTICAL THAT SUCH A BOMB DOES INDEED EXIST!
IT WOULD REQUIRE RARE STRATEGIC RESOURCES--AND AN EXTREMELY COMPLEX TECHNOLOGY!
THERE AREN'T TEN MEN IN THE WORLD CAPABLE OF PRODUCING SUCH A BOMB!
WOULD YOU SAY THAT DR. LUCAS NAGY, OF HUNGARY, WAS CAPABLE OF IT?
NAGY?...YES... A MAN OF HIS GENIUS AND ACCOMPLISHMENT COULD CONCEIVABLY DO IT...
...BUT HE'S BEEN MISSING OR DEAD FOR MONTHS!
MISSING, YES--BUT NOT DEAD!
I CAN'T GO INTO DETAILS, BUT I HAVE AMPLE EVIDENCE DR. NAGY IS INVOLVED IN THIS OMEGA CONSPIRACY!
MOREOVER, HE WAS SUPPORTED BY THE RESOURCES AND TECHNOLOGY YOU SAY HE'D NEED!
NOW WHAT DO YOU SAY?
FINALLY--
TELL US, BATMAN--WHAT SHALL WE DO?
MEET THEIR DEMANDS!
BUT--
THAT'S IT!


IT IS 9:30! AS THE CAPED CRUSADER SWINGS ACROSS THE NIGHT SKY, GOTHAM CITY SEEMS UNNATURALLY VIBRANT AND ALIVE ...UNAWARE THAT ITS VERY EXISTENCE HANGS IN THE BALANCE!
I WAS RIGHT! THE MIRAMAR CHANGED COURSE IN MID-OCEAN ...AS I WAS SUPPOSED TO DISCOVER IN PANAMA!
GOTHAM WAS THE TARGET ALL ALONG! IF ONLY I COULD ACT ON WHAT I THINK!
BUT WITHOUT ABSOLUTE PROOF, I DARE NOT TAKE RESPONSIBILITY!
THE ONLY CHANCE LEFT OF GETTING THAT PROOF IS THROUGH MY ONLY POSSIBLE LINK TO OMEGA--
--THE ONE WHO GAVE ME THAT FIRST CLUE TO THE HUNGARY-BURUNDI-PANAMA TRIANGLE--
--PAMELA DREW!
SHE'S STILL IN THIS HOTEL UNDER PROTECTIVE CUSTODY! THAT'S HER ROOM... BUT THE BILLION-DOLLAR QUESTION IS --WILL SHE STAY PUT?
HALF A MILE DISTANT, THE BATMAN'S APPOINTMENT WITH DESTINY DRAWS CLOSER...
STILL NO WORD ABOUT THE BATMAN REACHING PANAMA! MAYBE ONE OF OUR ASSAULT TEAMS ACTUALLY KNOCKED HIM OFF! THEY ALL HAD ORDERS TO KILL IF THEY COULD!
EXACTLY! ANYTHING LESS! AND HE MIGHT HAVE SUSPECTED!
OUR STRATEGY IS BASED ON THE BELIEF THAT THE BATMAN COULD OVERCOME EVERYTHING! HE'LL MAKE IT TO GOTHAM ALL RIGHT--IN TIME TO PROVE OUR CASE!
ONE MORE STOP NOW, AND WE'RE OFF!

AT THAT MOMENT...
PAMELA'S MAKING HER MOVE--!
SO AM I--!
GOING SOMEWHERE, PAMELA?--AN UNSCHEDULED FLIGHT?
KRINK
KLICK
HONNNK
HONNNK
A HORN--FROM THE STREET! A SIGNAL...FOR PAMELA--?
CONTINUED ON PAGE FOLLOWING

WHAT'S KEEPING HER?
MAYBE SHE'S HAVING TROUBLE WITH THAT SKIRT COP! GO UP AND TAKE CARE OF IT!
SUDDENLY, THE QUIET RESIDENTIAL STREET ERUPTS IN SUSTAINED VIOLENCE!
THE BATMAN! THAT MEANS--
--LET'S GET OUTTA HERE!
SMRAAASH

TOK
BLUG

TWENTY MINUTES LATER, POLICE H.Q.--
YOU FOOL, HOW LONG CAN YOU HOLD US AGAINST OMEGA--A POWER THAT CAN FORCE GOTHAM TO PAY A BILLION--
NOBODY'S PAYING OMEGA ANYTHING!
HAVE YOUR LITTLE JOKE, BATMAN!
JOKING? YOU MISSHAPEN MASS OF BLUBBER--WHAT MAKES YOU THINK I'M JOKING?
YOU'RE INSANE! DON'T YOU UNDERSTAND? --GOTHAM CITY WILL BE BLOWN UP!
WITH YOU IN IT--?
ABSOLUTELY! WE'RE WORTHLESS AS HOSTAGES!
UNLESS THE RANSOM IS PAID, NOTHING WILL STOP THE LEADER OF OMEGA FROM CARRYING OUT THAT THREAT!
YOU HAVE NO RIGHT TO KEEP US HERE--TO CONDEMN US TO DEATH!
YOU'VE CONDEMNED YOURSELVES! YOU'LL TAKE YOUR CHANCES WITH THE REST OF US!
WHY DID YOU SAY THAT ABOUT NOT PAYING?
TO FIND OUT WHAT I HAD TO KNOW!
THAT'S HIM, BATMAN--WE FOUND HIM IN THE BACK OF THE LIMOUSINE, JUST SITTING THERE!
HOW IS HE, DOCTOR?

IN A VERY DISJOINTED STATE... GROTESQUE CONFUSION... KEEPS MUTTERING A SOUND OR PERHAPS A WORD.
I'VE NEVER SEEN ANYTHING LIKE IT...
I HAVE!
AND THAT'S NOT ALL I'VE SEEN BEFORE!
THEREUPON THE BATMAN PRODUCES THE PHOTOGRAPH GIVEN HIM BY THE HUNGARIAN UNDERGROUND!
THIS MAN IS... MAYBE WAS... DR. LUCAS NAGY!
NEM... NEM...
DR. NAGY... WHAT ARE YOU TRYING TO SAY?
N-N... NEM...
LOUDER--!
NEMBOMBA
SAY IT AGAIN-- LOUDER! I MUST BE SURE!
NEMBOMBA!
I'M OFF, DOCTOR--TO PLACE A BILLION-DOLLAR BET!
THE BATMAN'S GONE?
WHAT HAPPENED IN HERE?
I DON'T KNOW! ALL I HEARD WAS THIS MAN SAYING SOMETHING!
IT SOUNDED LIKE SOMEPLACE IN AFRICA-- NEMBOMBA!
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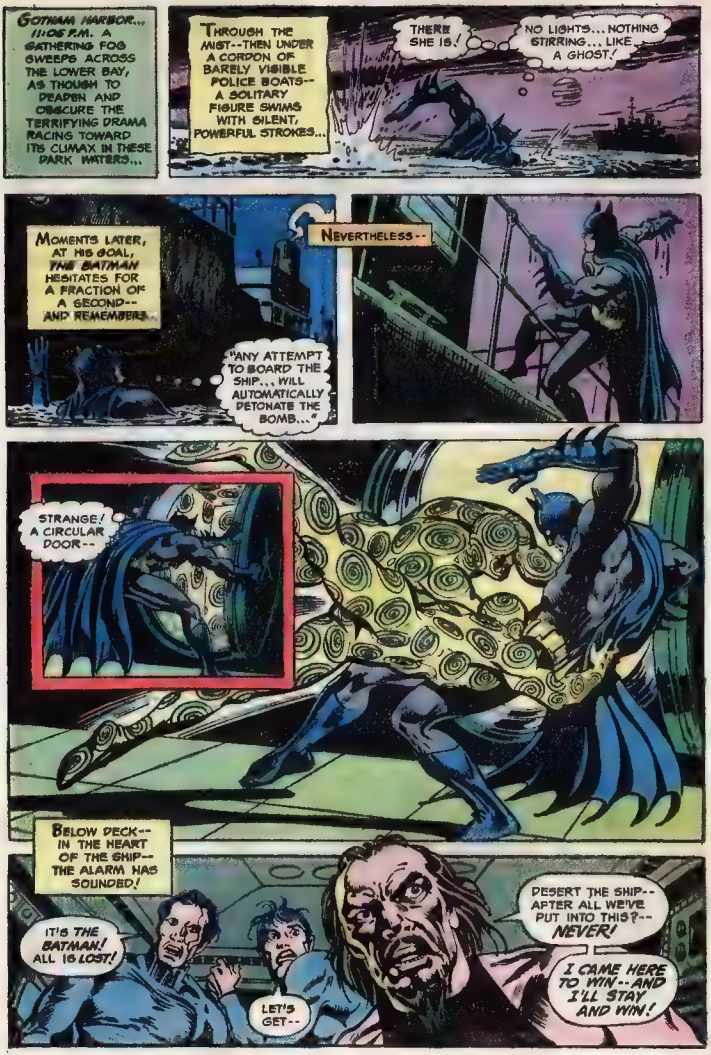
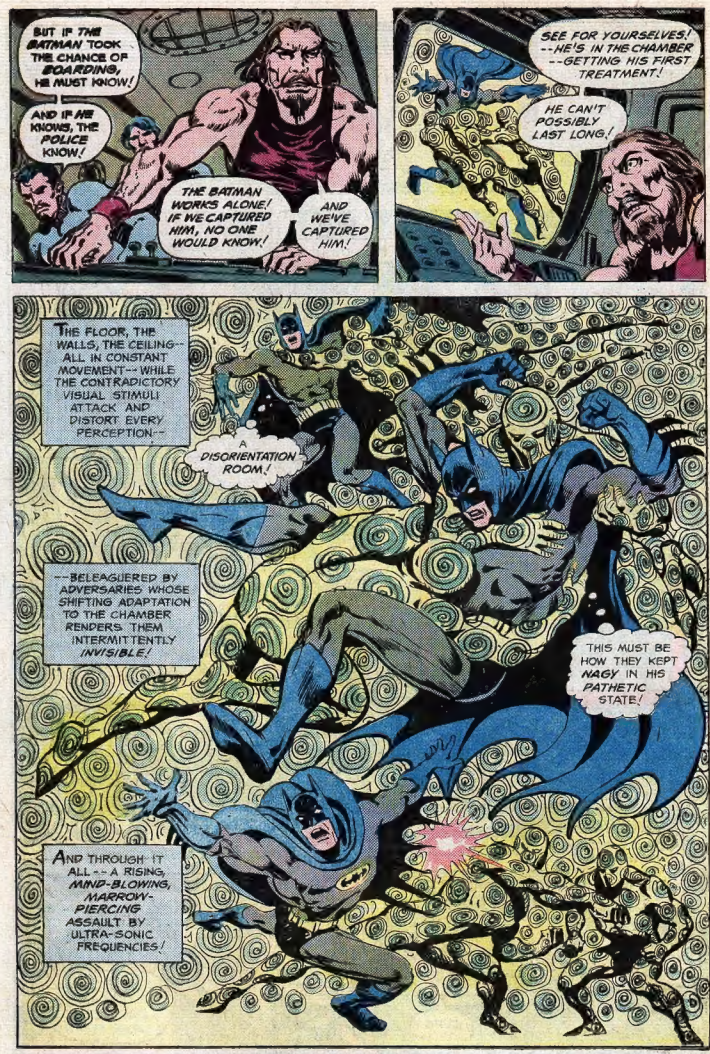
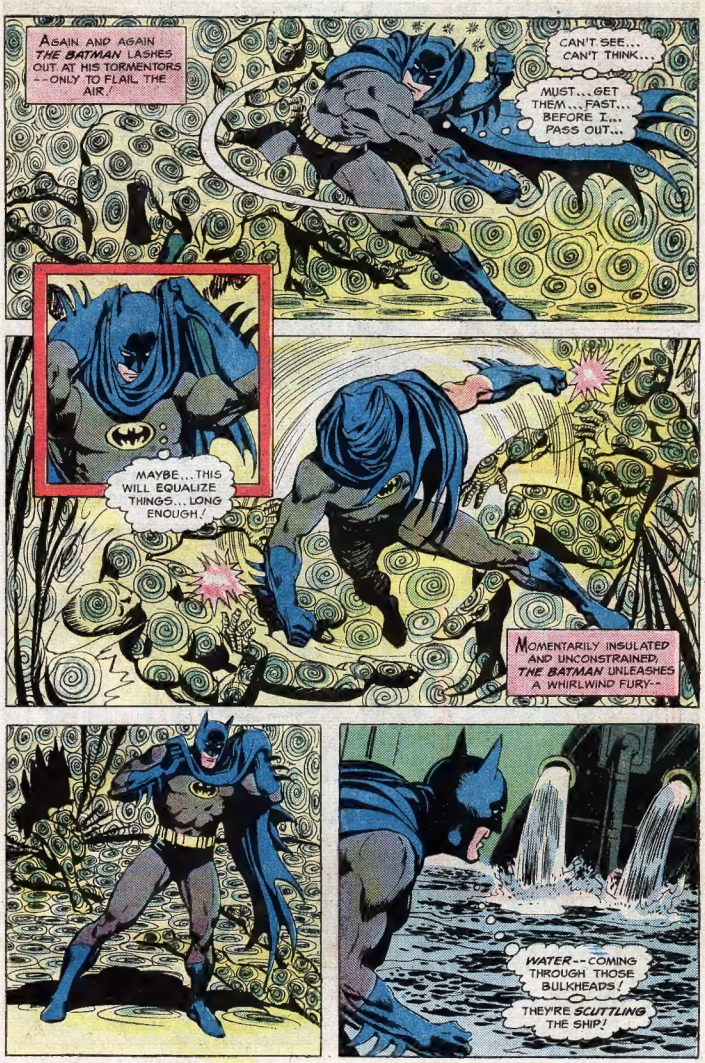
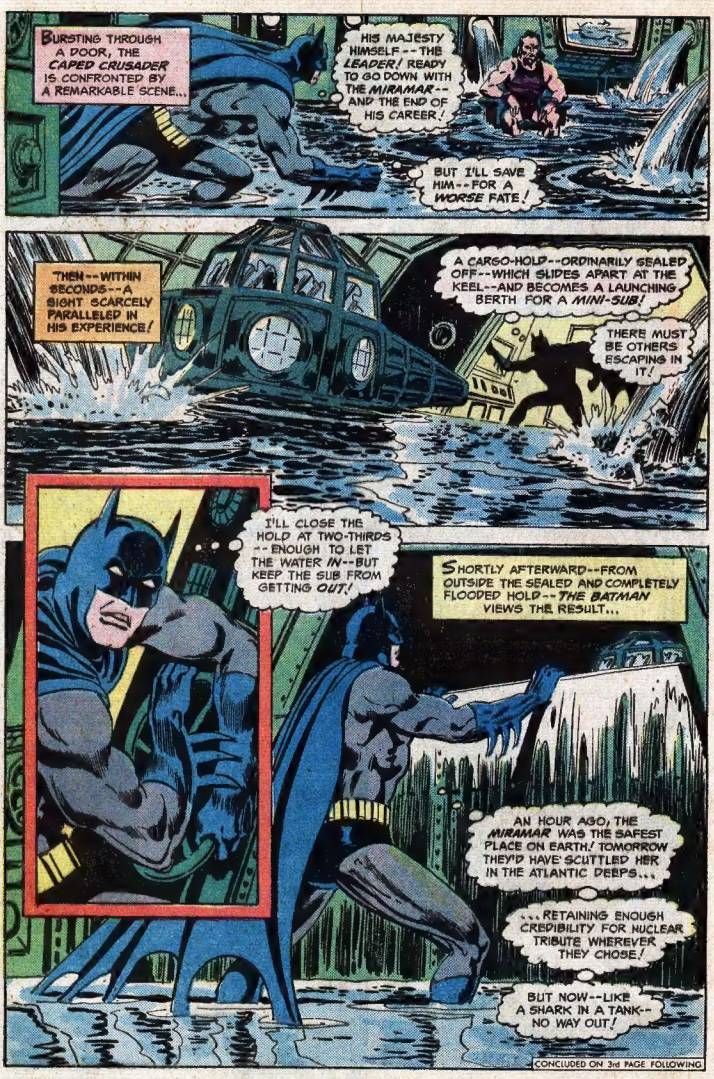

GOTHAM HARBOR... 11:06 P.M. A GATHERING FOG SWEEPS ACROSS THE LOWER BAY, AS THOUGH TO DEADEN AND OBSCURE THE TERRIFYING DRAMA RACING TOWARD ITS CLIMAX IN THESE DARK WATERS...
THROUGH THE MIST--THEN UNDER A CORDON OF BARELY VISIBLE POLICE BOATS--A SOLITARY FIGURE SWIMS WITH SILENT, POWERFUL STROKES...
THERE SHE IS!
NO LIGHTS... NOTHING STIRRING... LIKE A GHOST!
MOMENTS LATER, AT HIS GOAL, THE BATMAN HESITATES FOR A FRACTION OF A SECOND--AND REMEMBERS...
"ANY ATTEMPT TO BOARD THE SHIP... WILL AUTOMATICALLY DETONATE THE BOMB..."
NEVERTHELESS--
STRANGE! A CIRCULAR DOOR--
BELOW DECK--IN THE HEART OF THE SHIP--THE ALARM HAS SOUNDED!
IT'S THE BATMAN! ALL IS LOST!
LET'S GET--
DESERT THE SHIP--AFTER ALL WE'VE PUT INTO THIS?--NEVER!
I CAME HERE TO WIN--AND I'LL STAY AND WIN!


BUT IF THE BATMAN TOOK THE CHANCE OF BOARDING, HE MUST KNOW!
AND IF HE KNOWS, THE POLICE KNOW!
THE BATMAN WORKS ALONE! IF WE CAPTURED HIM, NO ONE WOULD KNOW!
AND WE'VE CAPTURED HIM!
SEE FOR YOURSELVES! --HE'S IN THE CHAMBER --GETTING HIS FIRST TREATMENT!
HE CAN'T POSSIBLY LAST LONG!
THE FLOOR, THE WALLS, THE CEILING-- ALL IN CONSTANT MOVEMENT-- WHILE THE CONTRADICTORY VISUAL STIMULI ATTACK AND DISTORT EVERY PERCEPTION--
A DISORIENTATION ROOM!
--BELEAGUERED BY ADVERSARIES WHOSE SHIFTING ADAPTATION TO THE CHAMBER RENDERS THEM INTERMITTENTLY INVISIBLE!
THIS MUST BE HOW THEY KEPT NAGY IN HIS PATHETIC STATE!
AND THROUGH IT ALL-- A RISING, MIND-BLOWING, MARROW-PIERCING ASSAULT BY ULTRA-SONIC FREQUENCIES!


AGAIN AND AGAIN THE BATMAN LASHES OUT AT HIS TORMENTORS--ONLY TO FLAIL THE AIR!
CAN'T SEE... CAN'T THINK...
MUST...GET THEM...FAST... BEFORE I... PASS OUT...
MAYBE...THIS WILL EQUALIZE THINGS...LONG ENOUGH!
MOMENTARILY INSULATED AND UNCONSTRAINED, THE BATMAN UNLEASHES A WHIRLWIND FURY--
WATER--COMING THROUGH THOSE BULKHEADS!
THEY'RE SCUTTLING THE SHIP!


BURSTING THROUGH A DOOR, THE CAPED CRUSADER IS CONFRONTED BY A REMARKABLE SCENE...
HIS MAJESTY HIMSELF--THE LEADER! READY TO GO DOWN WITH THE MIRAMAR--AND THE END OF HIS CAREER!
BUT I'LL SAVE HIM--FOR A WORSE FATE!
THEN--WITHIN SECONDS--A SIGHT SCARCELY PARALLELED IN HIS EXPERIENCE!
A CARGO-HOLD--ORDINARILY SEALED OFF--WHICH SLIDES APART AT THE KEEL--AND BECOMES A LAUNCHING BERTH FOR A MINI-SUB!
THERE MUST BE OTHERS ESCAPING IN IT!
I'LL CLOSE THE HOLD AT TWO-THIRDS--ENOUGH TO LET THE WATER IN--BUT KEEP THE SUB FROM GETTING OUT!
SHORTLY AFTERWARD--FROM OUTSIDE THE SEALED AND COMPLETELY FLOODED HOLD--THE BATMAN VIEWS THE RESULT...
AN HOUR AGO, THE MIRAMAR WAS THE SAFEST PLACE ON EARTH! TOMORROW THEY'D HAVE SCUTTLED HER IN THE ATLANTIC DEEPS...
...RETAINING ENOUGH CREDIBILITY FOR NUCLEAR TRIBUTE WHEREVER THEY CHOSE!
BUT NOW--LIKE A SHARK IN A TANK--NO WAY OUT!
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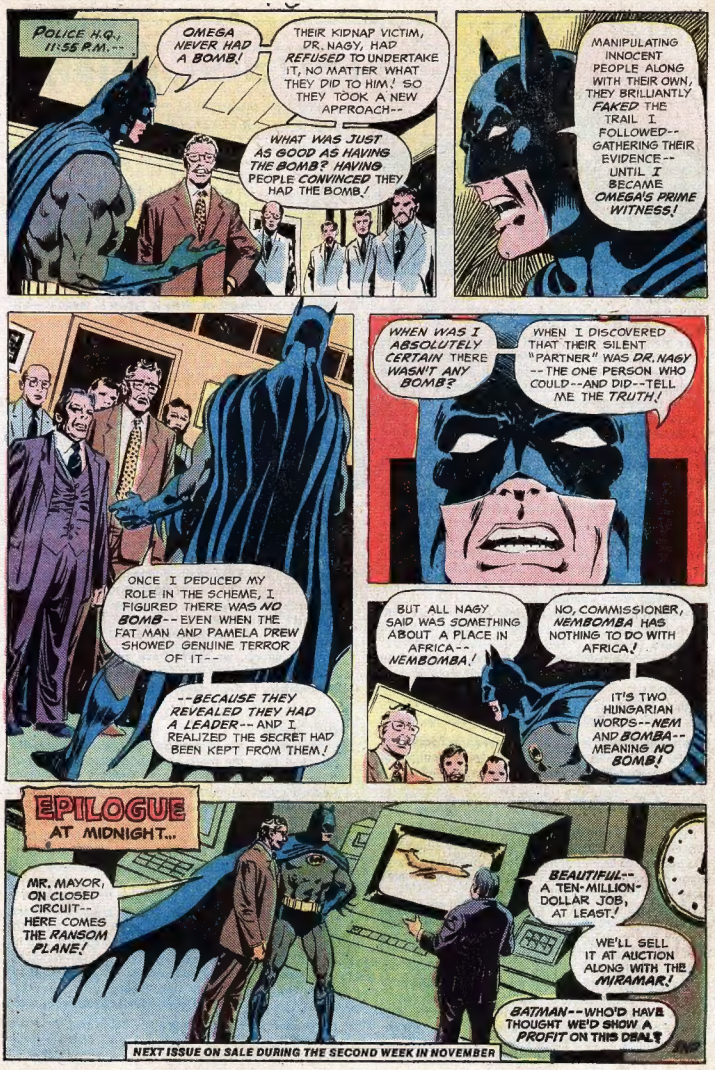
POLICE H.Q., 11:55 P.M.--
OMEGA NEVER HAD A BOMB!
THEIR KIDNAP VICTIM, DR. NAGY, HAD REFUSED TO UNDERTAKE IT, NO MATTER WHAT THEY DID TO HIM! SO THEY TOOK A NEW APPROACH--
WHAT WAS JUST AS GOOD AS HAVING THE BOMB? HAVING PEOPLE CONVINCED THEY HAD THE BOMB!
MANIPULATING INNOCENT PEOPLE ALONG WITH THEIR OWN, THEY BRILLIANTLY FAKED THE TRAIL I FOLLOWED--GATHERING THEIR EVIDENCE--UNTIL I BECAME OMEGA'S PRIME WITNESS!
ONCE I DEDUCED MY ROLE IN THE SCHEME, I FIGURED THERE WAS NO BOMB--EVEN WHEN THE FAT MAN AND PAMELA DREW SHOWED GENUINE TERROR OF IT--
--BECAUSE THEY REVEALED THEY HAD A LEADER--AND I REALIZED THE SECRET HAD BEEN KEPT FROM THEM!
WHEN WAS I ABSOLUTELY CERTAIN THERE WASN'T ANY BOMB?
WHEN I DISCOVERED THAT THEIR SILENT "PARTNER" WAS DR. NAGY--THE ONE PERSON WHO COULD--AND DID--TELL ME THE TRUTH!
BUT ALL NAGY SAID WAS SOMETHING ABOUT A PLACE IN AFRICA--NEMBOMBA!
NO, COMMISSIONER, NEMBOMBA HAS NOTHING TO DO WITH AFRICA!
IT'S TWO HUNGARIAN WORDS--NEM AND BOMBA--MEANING NO BOMB!
EPILOGUE
AT MIDNIGHT...
MR. MAYOR, ON CLOSED CIRCUIT--HERE COMES THE RANSOM PLANE!
BEAUTIFUL--A TEN-MILLION-DOLLAR JOB, AT LEAST!
WE'LL SELL IT AT AUCTION ALONG WITH THE MIRAMAR!
BATMAN--WHO'D HAVE THOUGHT WE'D SHOW A PROFIT ON THIS DEAL?
NEXT ISSUE ON SALE DURING THE SECOND WEEK IN NOVEMBER